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(54) **BEAM SHAPING OF HIGH INTENSITY
HIGH FREQUENCY OPTICAL OUTPUT**

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G02B 1/02 (2006.01)

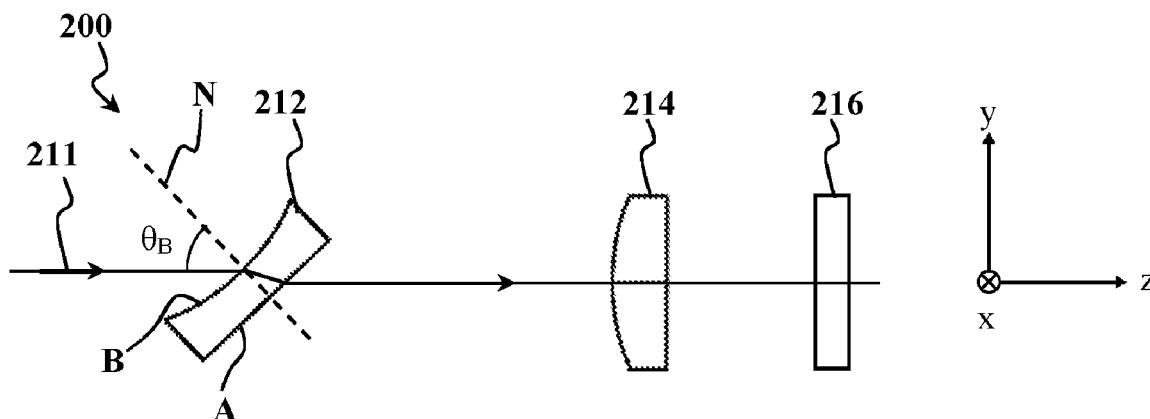
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See application file for complete search history.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An optical output coupler includes an uncoated plano-
concave lens having a planar side and a concave side. An
optical axis of the plano-concave lens is tilted at or near a
Brewster angle relative to a beam axis. A first optical
element is configured to focus a beam of radiation emerging
from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a first
axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis. The first optical
element is disposed between the planar side of the plano-
concave lens and a second optical element. The second
optical element is configured to focus a beam of radiation
emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens
along a second axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis,
wherein the second axis is different from the first axis.

52 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets



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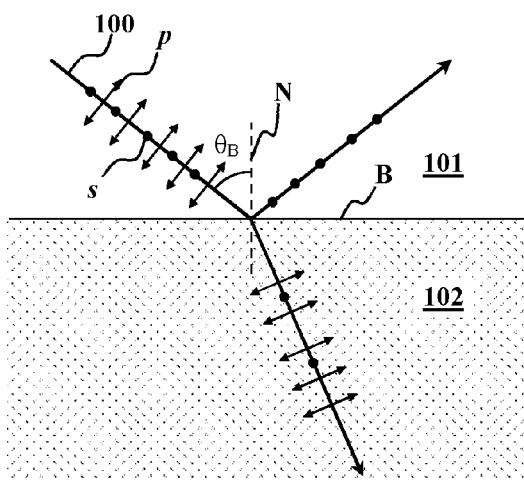


FIG. 1A

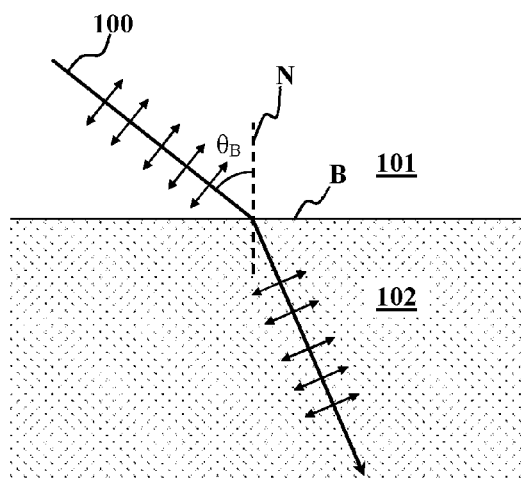


FIG. 1B

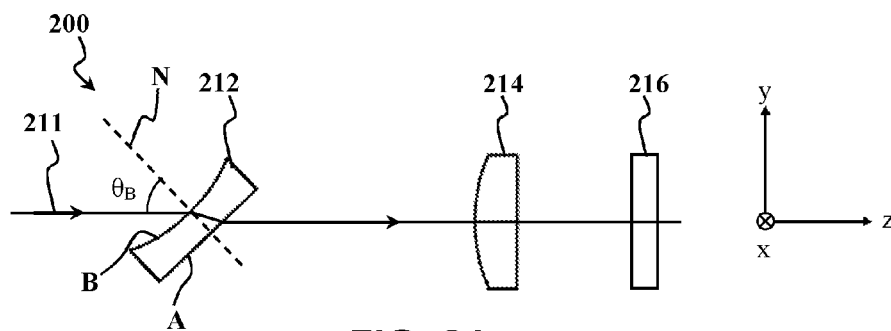


FIG. 2A

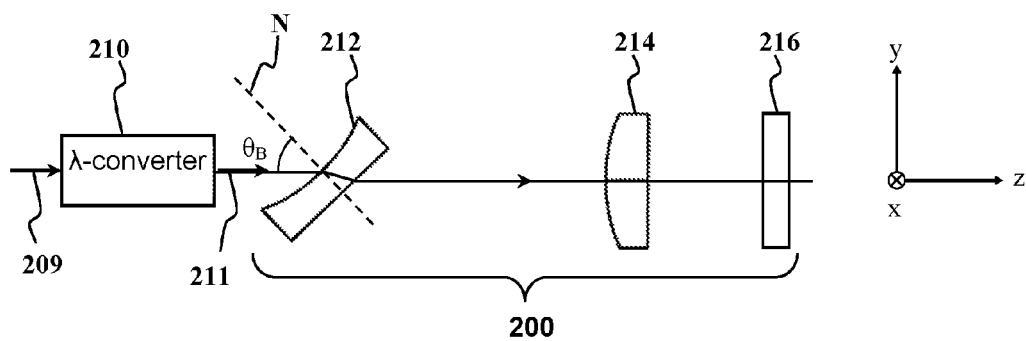


FIG. 2B

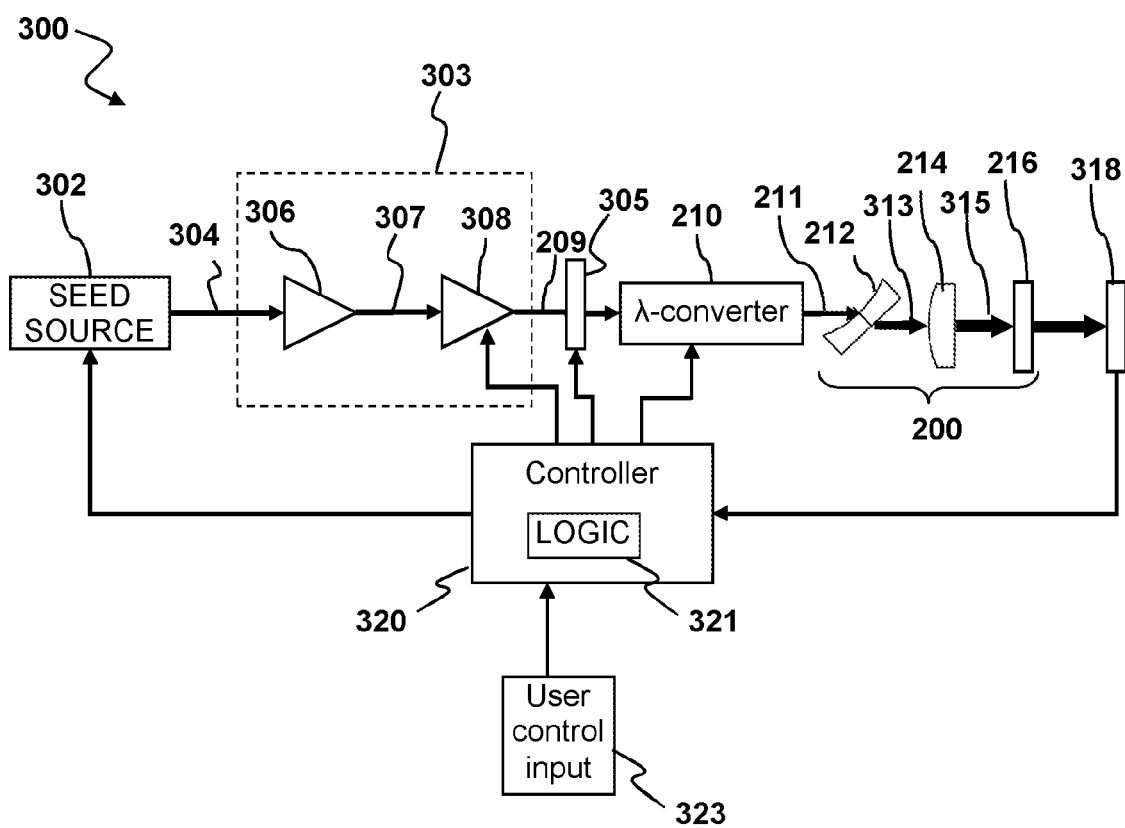


FIG. 3

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BEAM SHAPING OF HIGH INTENSITY HIGH FREQUENCY OPTICAL OUTPUT

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

This Application is a continuation of International Patent Application Number PCT/US2015/050772, filed Sep. 17, 2015, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference. International Patent Application Number PCT/US2015/050772 claims the priority benefit of commonly assigned U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/052,350, filed Sep. 18, 2014, the entire contents of which are incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

Aspects of the present disclosure relate to optical frequency conversion and more specifically to beam shaping for the output of an optical frequency conversion system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

High-powered optical sources have many applications in which an intense beam of light is focused onto a substrate or other target. Many high power optical systems make use of wavelength conversion to produce light having a desired wavelength or range of wavelengths. Often the process of conversion involves performing some non-linear optical wavelength conversion on input light from a source, such as a laser. The wavelengths that can be produced by nonlinear optical wavelength conversion are limited however by the wavelengths that can be produced with available lasers and the nonlinear optical wavelength conversion processes. For example, many wavelength-converted laser systems are based on a seed laser that produces light at a fundamental vacuum wavelength of 1064 nanometers. The infrared 1064 nm light can be converted to 532 nm visible light by nonlinear frequency doubling. The 523 nm visible light can be converted to 266 nm ultraviolet light in a subsequent nonlinear frequency doubling process.

Optical frequency conversion often requires high peak input intensity (power per unit area) in order to obtain efficient optical frequency conversion. As a result, the output beam is often a narrow, high power beam. It is often desired to expand or otherwise shape the narrow output beam. However, high intensity, high frequency output beams present challenges for beam shaping. Beam shaping is typically done with mirrors, lenses, or other optical components that expand the beam diameter and/or convert an elliptical beam to a round beam. One of the challenges is to reduce reflections of the output beam from the surfaces of the optical elements used for beam shaping. One conventional approach to reducing reflections is to coat the surfaces of the optical elements with an anti-reflection (AR) coating. Unfortunately, such coatings are susceptible to damage from high intensity, high frequency light.

It is within this context that embodiments of the present invention arise.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIGS. 1A-1B is a cross-sectional schematic diagram illustrating the concept of Brewster's angle as it applies to certain aspects of the present disclosure.

FIG. 2A is a cross-sectional schematic diagram illustrating an optical output coupler according to an aspect of the present disclosure.

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FIG. 2B is a cross-sectional schematic diagram illustrating an optical wavelength converter according to an aspect of the present disclosure.

FIG. 3 is a schematic diagram illustrating a wavelength-converted optical source according to an aspect of the present disclosure.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

Although the following detailed description contains many specific details for the purposes of illustration, anyone of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that many variations and alterations to the following details are within the scope of the invention. Accordingly, the exemplary embodiments of the invention described below are set forth without any loss of generality to, and without imposing limitations upon, the claimed invention.

Glossary

As used herein, the following terms have the following meanings:

Cavity or Optically Resonant Cavity refers to an optical path defined by two or more reflecting surfaces along which light can reciprocate or circulate. Objects that intersect the optical path are said to be within the cavity.

Continuous wave (CW) laser refers to a laser that emits radiation continuously rather than in short bursts, as in a pulsed laser.

Duty Cycle (D) refers to the product of the pulse duration τ and the pulse repetition frequency (PRF) for pulses that occur at regular intervals. The duty cycle may be expressed as a ratio, for example, 0.01 or equivalently may be expressed as a percentage, for example 1%.

Diode Laser refers to a light-emitting diode designed to use stimulated emission to generate a coherent light output. Diode lasers are also known as laser diodes or semiconductor lasers.

Diode-Pumped Laser refers to a laser having a gain medium that is pumped by a diode laser.

Gain refers to an increase in intensity, power, or pulse energy of a signal that is transmitted from one point to another through an amplifier. The term "unsaturated gain" refers to the increase of a small signal passing through the amplifier, which does not significantly change the inversion level in the amplifier. As used herein gain and unsaturated gain will be used interchangeably.

Gain Medium refers to a material capable of generating optical gain as described below with respect to a Laser.

Infrared Radiation refers to electromagnetic radiation characterized by a vacuum wavelength between about 700 nanometers (nm) and about 100,000 nm.

Laser is an acronym for light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation. A laser is a cavity that contains a lasable material, or gain medium. This is any material—crystal, glass, liquid, semiconductor, dye or gas—the atoms of which are capable of emitting light when pumped, e.g., by other light or an electric discharge. The light emission is stimulated by the presence by a passing photon, which causes the emitted photon to have approximately the same phase and direction as the stimulating photon. The light (referred to herein as stimulated radiation) oscillates within the cavity, with a fraction ejected from the cavity to form an output beam.

Light: As used herein, the term "light" generally refers to electromagnetic radiation in a range of frequencies running

from infrared through the ultraviolet, roughly corresponding to a range of vacuum wavelengths from about 1 nanometer (10^{-9} meters) to about 100 microns.

Non-linear effect refers to a class of optical phenomena that can typically be viewed only with nearly monochromatic, directional beams of light, such as those produced by a laser. Higher harmonic generation (e.g., second-, third-, and fourth-harmonic generation), optical parametric oscillation, sum-frequency generation, difference-frequency generation, optical parametric amplification, and the stimulated Raman Effect are examples of non-linear effects.

Nonlinear Optical Wavelength Conversion Processes are non-linear optical processes whereby input light of a given vacuum wavelength λ_0 passing through a non-linear medium interacts with the medium and/or other light passing through the medium in a way that produces output light having a different vacuum wavelength than the input light. Nonlinear wavelength conversion is equivalent to nonlinear frequency conversion, since wavelength and frequency are related by the vacuum speed of light. Both terms may be used interchangeably. Nonlinear Optical Wavelength conversion includes:

Higher Harmonic Generation (HHG), e.g., second harmonic generation (SHG), third harmonic generation (THG), fourth harmonic generation (FHG), etc., wherein two or more photons of input light of frequency f_0 interact in a way that produces an output light photon having a frequency Nf_0 , where N is the number of photons that interact. For example, in SHG, $N=2$.

Sum Frequency Generation (SFG), wherein an input light photon of frequency f_1 interacts with another input light photon of frequency f_2 in a way that produces an output light photon having a frequency f_1+f_2 .

Difference Frequency Generation (DFG), wherein an input light photon of frequency f_1 interacts with another input light photon of frequency f_2 in a way that produces an output light photon having a frequency f_1-f_2 .

Non-linear material refers to materials that possess a non-zero nonlinear dielectric response to optical radiation that can give rise to non-linear effects. Examples of nonlinear materials include crystals of lithium niobate (LiNbO_3), lithium triborate (LBO), beta-barium borate (BBO), Cesium Lithium Borate (CLBO), KDP and its isomorphs, LiIO_3 , as well as quasi-phase-matched materials, e.g., PPLN, PPSLT, PPKTP and the like.

Optical amplifier refers to an apparatus that amplifies the power of an input optical signal. An optical amplifier is similar to a laser in that it uses a gain medium driven by pumping radiation. The amplifier generally lacks feedback (i.e. a cavity), so that it has gain but does not oscillate. As used herein an optical power amplifier generally refers to the last optical amplifier before delivery of an amplified beam to a target or a wavelength converter. An amplifier stage between a source of radiation and a power amplifier is generally referred to herein as a preamplifier.

Phase-matching refers to the technique used in a multi-wave nonlinear optical process to enhance the distance over which the coherent transfer of energy between the waves is possible. For example, a three-wave process is said to be phase-matched when $k_1+k_2=k_3$, where k_i is the wave vector of the i^{th} wave participating in the process. In frequency doubling, e.g., the process is most efficient when the fundamental and the second harmonic phase velocities are matched. Typically the phase-matching condition is achieved by careful selection of the optical wavelength, polarization state, and propagation direction in the non-linear material.

Pulse Duration (τ) refers to the temporal duration or lifetime of a repetitive signal, e.g., the time interval between the half-power points on the leading and trailing edges of the pulse. Pulse duration is sometimes referred to as "pulse width".

Pulse Energy refers to the amount of energy in a pulse. Pulse energy may be calculated by integrating instantaneous pulse power over the pulse duration.

Pulse Period (T) refers to the time between equivalent points of successive pulses in a train of two or more pulses.

Pulse Repetition Frequency (PRF) refers to the rate of repetition of pulses per unit time. The PRF is inversely related to the period T , e.g., $\text{PRF}=1/T$.

Q refers to the figure of merit of a resonator (cavity), defined as $(2\pi) \times (\text{average energy stored in the resonator}) / (\text{energy dissipated per cycle})$. The higher the reflectivity of the surfaces of an optical resonator and the lower the absorption losses, the higher the Q and the less energy loss from the desired mode.

Quasi-CW refers to generating a succession of pulses at a high enough repetition rate to appear continuous.

Quasi Phase-matched (QPM) Material: In a quasi-phase-matched material, the fundamental and higher harmonic radiation are approximately phase-matched by periodically changing the sign of the material's non-linear coefficient. The period of the sign change (k_{QPM}) adds an additional term to the phase matching equation such that $k_{QPM}+k_1+k_2=k_3$. In a QPM material, the fundamental and higher harmonic can have identical polarizations, often improving efficiency. Examples of quasi-phase-matched materials include periodically-poled lithium tantalate (PPLT), periodically-poled lithium niobate (PPLN), periodically poled stoichiometric lithium tantalate (PPSLT), periodically poled potassium titanyl phosphate (PPKTP) or periodically poled microstructured glass fiber.

Raman Scattering refers to a scattering of incident light by matter in which the scattered light has a lower frequency than the incident light. The difference between the frequencies of the incident and scattered light (referred to as the Raman shift) corresponds to a natural vibrational frequency of the scattering material.

Saturation of an optical amplifier refers to a decrease of the gain coefficient of a medium near some transition frequency when the power of the incident radiation near that frequency exceeds a certain value. If the gain coefficient is constant, the power emitted by the medium is proportional to the incident power. However, there is typically a limit to the rate at which a gain medium can emit power. This limit depends on the lifetimes of the energy levels involved. As this limit is reached, the stimulated transitions become rapid enough to significantly lower the upper energy level population, thereby decreasing the gain coefficient. The effect is to "flatten" the amplified power as a function of input power.

Stimulated Raman Scattering (SRS) is a type of Raman scattering that can occur with an intense optical beam. The Raman-scattered light experiences gain and its power increases exponentially. If the power of the incident light exceeds a threshold value, a large portion of the incident light is converted to Raman-scattered light having a lower frequency than the incident light. SRS is also sometimes known as the stimulated Raman effect or coherent Raman effect.

Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation refers to electromagnetic radiation characterized by a vacuum wavelength shorter than that of the visible region, but longer than that of soft X-rays. Ultraviolet radiation may be subdivided into the following wavelength ranges: near UV, from about 380 nm to about

200 nm; far or vacuum UV (FUV or VUV), from about 200 nm to about 10 nm; and extreme UV (EUV or XUV), from about 1 nm to about 31 nm.

Vacuum Wavelength: The wavelength of electromagnetic radiation is generally a function of the medium in which the wave travels. The vacuum wavelength is the wavelength that electromagnetic radiation of a given frequency would have if the radiation were propagating through a vacuum and is given by the speed of light in vacuum divided by the frequency.

Introduction

According to aspects of the present disclosure an optical output coupler may utilize a plano-concave lens tilted at or near (e.g., within about 1° of) a Brewster angle for high intensity, high frequency (e.g., 266-nm) p-polarized light. As long as the concave surface radius is much larger than the beam size, the surface angle the beam sees is effectively constant across its diameter. This way the output coupler can use an uncoated optic with minimal losses to start expanding the beam. High quality bulk fused silica (or maybe CaF₂) should stand up well to the high intensity. Two crossed cylindrical lenses can collimate the beam with minimum ellipticity at a desired radius. The beam is much larger in diameter at these lenses, and there is much less concern about coating damage.

FIG. 1A and FIG. 1B illustrate the concept of Brewster's angle within the context of the present disclosure. As seen in FIG. 1A, when incoming light **100** encounters a boundary B between two media **101**, **102** with different refractive indices n_1 and n_2 , respectively, some of the light is usually reflected. According to the Fresnel equations, the fraction that is reflected depends on the incoming light's polarization and angle of incidence. Generally, unpolarized light can be thought of as being comprised of two different polarizations. Light polarized in the incident plane (the same plane as the incident ray and the surface normal N) is said to be p-polarized light p. Light polarized perpendicular to the incident plane is said to be s-polarized light s. The Fresnel equations predict that p-polarized light travelling from a first medium of refractive index n_1 to a second medium of refractive index n_2 will not be reflected if the angle of incidence is:

$$\theta_B = \arctan\left(\frac{n_2}{n_1}\right)$$

Only the s-polarized light is reflected for this incident angle. The angle θ_B is known as Brewster's angle is conventionally measured with respect to the normal N of the boundary B. As may be seen in FIG. 1B, if the incident light **100** is p-polarized, essentially none of the incident light is reflected at the boundary B and all of it is transmitted into the second medium **102**.

The principle of Brewster's angle can be applied to an optical output coupler for a wavelength converted optical system in accordance with aspects of the present disclosure. Wavelength conversion systems typically produce a narrow beam of polarized optical output. By orienting the first optical element of an output coupler at Brewster's angle relative to a polarized output beam, the first optical element can be made essentially non-reflecting without having to AR coat it.

FIG. 2A illustrates an example of an optical output coupler **200** for a wavelength converted optical system in

accordance with aspects of the present disclosure. The optical output coupler **200** generally includes a plano-concave lens **212** optically coupled to first and second optical elements **214**, **216**, which may be implemented, e.g., as cylindrical lenses. The plano-concave lens **212** has a planar side A and a concave side B.

Both sides may be uncoated. The plano-concave lens can be made of a suitable optical grade material such as fused silica or calcium difluoride (CaF₂). A radius of curvature of the concave side B of the plano-concave lens **212** may be between about 5 mm and about 25 mm. A distance from the plano concave lens **212** to the second cylindrical lens **216** along the beam axis is between about 75 mm and about 250 mm. It is noted that in FIG. 2A, the beam axis is shown as straight. However, aspects of the present disclosure include implementations in which the axis is bent, e.g., using prisms or mirrors to deflect the light as it travels through the output coupler **200**. The direction of the beam axis at a particular location in the output coupler may therefore be regarded as the direction of a central ray of light in the beam at that location.

The first cylindrical lens **214** is disposed between the planar side A of the plano-concave lens and the second cylindrical lens **216**. An optical axis N of the plano-concave lens **212** is tilted at a Brewster angle θ_B relative to an axis of an input beam **211**, which is incident on the concave side B of the plano-concave lens. The plano-concave lens may be configured to diverge an approximately parallel input beam **211** incident on the concave side B such that a diameter of the beam of radiation increases to between about 250% and about 2500% of the diameter at the concave side.

Prisms, either singly or in combination, are frequently used to compensate for astigmatism of frequency converted beams. Aspects of the present disclosure are therefore equally applicable to configurations that use a combination of optical elements including prism(s) in conjunction with, or in lieu of, either or both the cylindrical lenses as the optical elements **214** and **216**. The prism(s) may be used in conjunction with a spherical lens, to achieve the same results as the cylindrical lenses of FIG. 2 and FIG. 3.

The first optical element **214** is configured to collimate a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a first axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis. An optical axis of the first optical element **214** may be aligned substantially parallel to the beam axis. An optical axis of the second optical element **216** may be aligned substantially parallel to the beam axis. Some small adjustment may be used for fine-tuning of beam astigmatism. As used herein, the term "substantially parallel" means parallel to within about ± 5 degrees.

The second optical element **216** is configured to collimate a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side A of the plano-concave lens along a second axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis. The second axis is different from the first axis. By way of example, the first axis may be the y-axis and the second axis may be the x-axis, as shown in FIG. 2A. The first and second axes need not necessarily be perpendicular to each other.

For the reasons discussed above with respect to FIG. 1B, the plano-concave lens can be made effectively non-reflecting if the input beam is p-polarized, i.e., polarized along the y-axis in the example illustrated in FIG. 2A. This avoids the need for an AR coating in the concave side B. The plano-concave lens **212** is therefore less susceptible to damage resulting from a high-intensity high frequency input beam **211**, e.g., a beam of ultraviolet light. Expansion of the beam between the plano-concave lens **212** and the first cylindrical

lens reduces the intensity of the input beam **211**. The optical surfaces of the cylindrical lenses **214**, **216** may be AR coated. If the beam diameter expands sufficiently, AR coatings on the optical elements **214**, **216** can withstand the beam without significant damage.

As a numerical example, the input beam **211** may be an elliptical beam of ultraviolet radiation of vacuum from the crystal ($250\text{ }\mu\text{m}\times 350\text{ }\mu\text{m}$) with a peak irradiance of 1.5×10^4 Watts/mm². Using a Brewster-angled plano-concave lens **212** made of fused silica of focal length -16 mm and cylindrical lenses **214**, **216** of focal lengths 36.5 mm and 34 mm, respectively such an input beam may be collimated to a circular 2-mm diameter circular beam with a peak irradiance of about 3.1 Watts/mm².

The plano-concave lens **212**, when used at an angle, has different focal lengths in the tangential and sagittal axes: $f^*\cos(\theta)$ for tangential, and $f/\cos(\theta)$ for sagittal, where f is the nominal, normal incidence focal length, and θ , in this case, is the Brewster angle θ_B , or nearly the Brewster, angle. For example, if the lens **212** has a refractive index=1.5, then $\theta=56.3$ degrees, $\cos(\theta)=0.555$. The effective tangential focal length is reduced to approximately 56% of its normal incidence value and the effective sagittal focal length is increased to approximately 180% of its normal incidence value. For the previously mentioned focal length of -16 mm, the tangential and sagittal focal lengths become approximately -8.9 mm and approximately -29 mm, respectively.

Depending on the astigmatism characteristics (e.g. waist diameter and divergence for each axis) of the input beam **211** it is possible to select optimum lens focal length combinations for the output coupler **200** such that a collimated, nearly circular exit beam will be generated. There is a trade-off between compactness and aberrations. As the focal length of the plano-concave lens **212** is reduced, the beam shaping section **200** is equivalently reduced in length. However, the $f/\#$ will also be reduced, with a requisite increase in aberrations. The aberrations will further be increased by the reduced effective tangential focal length in that axis. The optimum parameter selections will depend on both the characteristics of the input beam **211** and the acceptable output beam quality. For the preceding example ($250\text{ }\mu\text{m}\times 350\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ input beam waist **211**, -16 mm plano-concave lens **212**, 36.5 mm cylindrical lens **214** and 34 mm cylindrical lens **216**) the induced tangential RMS wavefront error is significantly less than 0.1 waves, which would be considered diffraction limited for most applications.

FIG. 2B illustrates a wavelength converter system that utilizes the output coupler shown in FIG. 2A. The wavelength converter system includes a wavelength converter **210** optically coupled to the output coupler **200**. The optical wavelength converter is configured to generate a wavelength converted output beam of radiation **211** from an input beam of radiation **209**. The optical output coupler is configured to receive the wavelength converted output beam of radiation **211** as its input. The output coupler **200** is configured as described above with respect to FIG. 2A.

The optical source **301**, optical wavelength converter **210** and output coupler **200** may be configured such that the wavelength converted output beam of radiation has a substantially elliptical cross-section having a major diameter between about 0.15 mm and about 0.5 mm and a minor diameter between about 0.2 mm and about WW 0.6 mm. The plano-concave lens in the output coupler may be configured to diverge an approximately parallel beam of radiation **211** incident on the concave side B such that a diameter of the beam of radiation increases to between about 1.0 mm and about 5.0 mm at the first cylindrical lens **214**. Depending on

the irradiance of the beam **211**, the expansion should be sufficient that the beam irradiance is low enough at the optical surfaces of the cylindrical lenses **214**, **216** to avoid any damage to AR coatings on them.

By way of example, and not by way of limitation, the wavelength converter **210** may implement a nonlinear optical wavelength conversion process, as discussed above. By way of more specific example, the wavelength converter may include a non-linear optical crystal that is configured to produce output radiation **211** having a vacuum wavelength in the ultraviolet range of the electromagnetic spectrum. For example, the non-linear crystal may be configured to implement second harmonic generation on a visible-wavelength input beam **209** (e.g., having a vacuum wavelength of 532 nm) to produce an ultraviolet output radiation **211** (e.g., having a vacuum wavelength of 266 nm).

In alternative implementations, the wavelength converter **210** may include two different nonlinear crystals. As a first example, a first nonlinear crystal may be configured to convert infrared input radiation (e.g., having a vacuum wavelength of 1064 nm) to visible radiation (e.g., having a vacuum wavelength of 532 nm) by way of second harmonic generation. A second nonlinear crystal may be configured to convert the visible radiation to ultraviolet radiation by way of second harmonic generation. As a second example, the wavelength converter **210** may include a first nonlinear crystal configured to generate a frequency-tripled intermediate output from an infrared input by third harmonic generation and a second nonlinear crystal configured implement sum-frequency generation on a leftover portion of the infrared input and the frequency-tripled intermediate output to generate a final output having a frequency four times that of the infrared input radiation.

The best technique for producing a frequency four times that of the infrared input radiation depends on the specific requirements and cost/complexity constraints. Parameters such as pulse energy, repetition rate and pulse duration, in combination with desired cost and lifetime goals will determine whether second harmonic generation of a visible wavelength beam via use of a single crystal or whether a sum frequency generation technique is preferred.

The wavelength converter system shown in FIG. 2B may be further optimized, e.g., by separating out unconverted input radiation **209** from the output beam **211** and/or by adding an energy monitor.

FIG. 3 depicts an optical system **300** according to an aspect of the present disclosure. The system **300** generally includes an optical source **301**, a wavelength converter **210**, and an output coupler **200** of the type described above. By way of example, and not by way of limitation, the optical source **301** may include a seed source **302**, one or more optional optical amplifiers **306**, and a power amplifier **308**. In such an example, the seed source **302** generates an optical seed signal **304**, which is optically coupled to the optional preamplifier **306**.

The seed source **302** may be any of the representative laser types of semiconductor seed sources, such as distributed feedback laser (DFB), distributed Bragg reflector laser (DBR), Fabry-Perot laser (FP), external cavity diode laser, vertical cavity semiconductor laser (VCSEL), vertical extended cavity semiconductor laser (VECSEL), or amplified stimulated emission source (ASE).

The seed signal **304** may be amplified by the pre-amplifier **306** to generate a pre-amplified signal **307** which is further amplified in the power amplifier **308** to produce an amplified output that serves as an input **209** for the wavelength converter **210**. By way of example, the optical amplifier **308**

may be a fiber amplifier. Examples of fiber amplifiers are described, e.g., in U.S. Pat. No. 7,529,281, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference. In particular, FIG. 3 of U.S. Pat. No. 7,529,281 and the associated discussion describe an example of a fiber amplifier.

As is well known in the art, bandpass filters, optical switches, and optical isolators can be placed between the amplifier stages to prevent backward propagating beams and minimize the effects of unseeded spontaneous emission.

The amplified output from the optical power amplifier **308** may be optically coupled to the optional wavelength converter **210**. The wavelength converter **210** converts at least a portion of the input **209** to produce a wavelength converted output **211** characterized by a different optical frequency than the amplified output **209**. The wavelength converter **210** may implement a nonlinear optical wavelength conversion process, as discussed above. In some embodiments, the system **300** may include coupling optics **305** that receive the amplified output **209** from the optical amplifier **308** and transmit it to the wavelength converter **210**. In some embodiments the wavelength converter **210** may not be required.

In general, the source of optical radiation and optical wavelength converter are configured such that the wavelength converted output beam of radiation has a substantially elliptical cross-section having a major diameter between about 0.2 mm and about 0.6 mm and a minor diameter between about 0.15 mm and about 0.5 mm.

The controller **320** may be operably coupled to the seed source **302** and/or optional optical preamplifier **306**, power amplifier **308**, and/or wavelength converter **210** to control the power or intensity of the wavelength-converted output **211** in response to user control inputs **323**. By way of example, in some embodiments, the system controller **320** may include hardware or software configured to implement programmable logic **321**. Such logic may cause the controller to operate in response to one or more feedback signals. For example, from a portion of the output **211** may be deflected, e.g., by a beamsplitter to a power monitor **318** and this signal may be used as part of a feedback loop.

The final output **211** may be delivered to any of a number of different types of targets to implement any of a number of different types of processes depending on the application. Applications include, but are not limited to, material processing, medical treatments, laser particle accelerators, and wafer inspection. Examples of suitable targets include, but are not limited to, metals, ceramics, semiconductors, polymers, composites, thin films, organic materials, in vitro or in vivo biological samples, and elementary particles. In the particular case of material processing, targets may include, e.g., wires, printed circuit (PC) boards, integrated circuit (IC) packages, IC wafers dies, LED wafers, packages, dies and the like. Examples of material processing applications include surface texturing, heat treatment, surface engraving, fine micro-machining, surface ablation, cutting, grooving, bump forming, coating, soldering, brazing, sintering, sealing, welding, link blowing, wafer scribing, dicing and marking, via drilling, memory repair, flat panel display repair, stereolithography, maskless lithography, surface diffusion and surface conversion to a compound.

Pulsed operation of the system shown in FIG. 3 may be implemented in many applications because it allows power stored in a power amplifier **308** to be released in short pulses. A simplest type of pulsed operation is continuous pulse train with the power amplifier **308** being pumped at a constant pump rate. To first order, peak fundamental output power is

increased by factor of $1/DC$, where DC is the pulse duty cycle. Duty cycle may be in the range from 0.01 to 0.00001. Peak power in amplified output **309** is 100 to 100,000 times the output of power amplifier operating in a continuous wave (cw) condition. Such high peak powers are one reason among many to avoid anti-reflection coatings on optical surfaces that are exposed to the wavelength-converted output beam **211**.

According to aspects of the present disclosure, high-power high-frequency optical outputs can be collimated while reducing the likelihood of damage to optical surfaces.

Several variations on the aspects described above are within the scope of the present disclosure. For example, if the confocal parameter is less than the length of a nonlinear optical material used as the wavelength converter **210**, then polishing curvature on the Brewster exit face of the nonlinear optical crystal would avoid the need for a separate angled lens **212**. The functions of the wavelength converter **210** and angled lens **212** could be combined into a single element. Alternatively, the angled lens **212** may be made from a non-linear optical material (e.g., LBO) that has a higher damage threshold than fused silica or calcium difluoride or other materials mentioned above. More generally, the material of the angled lens **212** may be selected primarily for its damage threshold properties, including materials not normally used in lenses, due to other poor properties (e.g., CLBO).

While the above is a complete description of the preferred embodiment of the present invention, it is possible to use various alternatives, modifications and equivalents. Therefore, the scope of the present invention should be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with their full scope of equivalents. Any feature, whether preferred or not, may be combined with any other feature, whether preferred or not. In the claims that follow, the indefinite article "A", or "An" refers to a quantity of one or more of the item following the article, except where expressly stated otherwise. The appended claims are not to be interpreted as including means-plus-function limitations, unless such a limitation is explicitly recited in a given claim using the phrase "means for".

What is claimed is:

1. A optical output coupler, comprising:

a plano-concave lens having a planar side and a concave side, wherein an optical axis of the plano-concave lens is tilted about an axis of curvature of the plano-concave lens or an axis parallel to the axis of curvature at or near a Brewster angle relative to a beam axis such that a beam of radiation is incident on a concave side of the plano-concave lens;

a first optical element configured to focus a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a first axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis; and

a second optical element, wherein the first optical element is disposed between the planar side of the plano-concave lens and the second optical element, wherein the second optical element is configured to focus a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a second axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis, wherein the second axis is different from the first axis.

2. The optical output coupler of claim 1, wherein the plano-concave lens is made of fused silica.

3. The optical output coupler of claim 1, wherein the plano-concave lens is made of calcium difluoride (CaF_2).

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4. The optical output coupler of claim 1, wherein the first axis is perpendicular to the second axis.

5. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein an optical axis of the first optical element is aligned substantially parallel to the beam axis.

6. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein an optical axis of the second optical element is aligned substantially parallel to the beam axis.

7. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein an optical axis of the first optical element is aligned substantially parallel to the beam axis and an optical axis of the second optical element is aligned substantially parallel to the beam axis.

8. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein one or more surfaces of the first optical element are coated with an anti-reflection coating.

9. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein one or more surfaces of the second optical element are coated with an anti-reflection coating.

10. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein one or more surfaces of the first optical element are coated with an anti-reflection coating and wherein one or more surfaces of the second optical element are coated with an anti-reflection coating.

11. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the plano-concave lens is configured to diverge an approximately parallel beam of radiation incident on the concave side such that a diameter of the approximately parallel beam of radiation increases to between about 250% and about 2500% of the diameter of the approximately parallel beam of radiation at the concave side of the plano-concave lens.

12. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein a radius of curvature of the concave side of the plano-concave lens is between about 5 mm and about 25 mm.

13. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the plano-concave lens, first optical element and second optical element are configured to collimate an elliptical radiation beam incident on the planar side of the plano-concave lens into a circular beam of radiation.

14. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein a distance from the plano concave lens to the second cylindrical lens along the beam axis is between about 75 mm and about 250 mm.

15. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the plano-concave lens is made from a nonlinear optical material.

16. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the plano-concave lens is made from a non-linear optical material having a higher threshold for damage from light than fused silica or calcium difluoride.

17. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the first optical element includes a cylindrical lens.

18. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the second optical element includes a cylindrical lens.

19. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the first optical element includes a first cylindrical lens and the second optical element is a second cylindrical lens.

20. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the first optical element includes a prism.

21. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the second optical element includes a prism.

22. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the first optical element includes a first prism and the second optical element includes a second prism.

23. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein the first optical element or the second optical element includes a prism and a spherical lens.

24. The output coupler of claim 1, wherein plano-concave lens is characterized by curvature in two dimensions and

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negative focal lengths with respect to two orthogonal axes, wherein tilt of the plano-concave lens about the axis of curvature or the axis parallel to the axis of curvature changes focal lengths for the tangential and sagittal axes of the plano-concave lens.

25. A wavelength converter system comprising:

an optical wavelength converter configured to generate a wavelength converted output beam of radiation from an input beam of radiation; and

an optical output coupler configured to receive the wavelength converted output beam of radiation, wherein the optical output coupler includes a plano-concave lens having a planar side and a concave side, wherein an optical axis of the plano-concave lens is tilted about an axis of curvature of the plano-concave lens or an axis parallel to the axis of curvature at or near a Brewster angle relative to a beam axis such that a beam of radiation is incident on a concave side of the plano-concave lens;

a first optical element configured to focus a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a first axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis; and a second optical element, wherein the first optical element is disposed between the planar side of the plano-concave lens and the second optical element, wherein the second optical element is configured to focus a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a second axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis, wherein the second axis is different from the first axis.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the wavelength converter includes a nonlinear optical material.

27. The system of claim 25, wherein the wavelength converter is configured to generate the wavelength converted output beam of radiation such that an optical frequency of the output beam is greater than an optical frequency of the input beam.

28. The system of claim 25, wherein the plano-concave lens is made from a nonlinear optical material.

29. The system of claim 25, wherein the wavelength converter is a nonlinear optical crystal having Brewster angle or near Brewster angle output face that is concave curved and acts as the plano-concave lens.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein a confocal parameter of the output coupler is less than a length of a nonlinear optical crystal, whereby functions of the wavelength converter and plano-concave lens are combined into a single element.

31. The system of claim 25, wherein the plano-concave lens is made from a non-linear optical material having a higher threshold for damage from light than fused silica or calcium difluoride.

32. The system of claim 25, wherein the first optical element includes a cylindrical lens.

33. The system of claim 25, wherein the second optical element includes a cylindrical lens.

34. The system of claim 25, wherein the first optical element includes a first cylindrical lens and the second optical element is a second cylindrical lens.

35. The system of claim 25, wherein the first optical element includes a prism.

36. The system of claim 25, wherein the second optical element includes a prism.

37. The system of claim 25, wherein the first optical element includes a first prism and the second optical element includes a second prism.

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38. The system of claim 25, wherein the first optical element or the second optical element includes a prism and a spherical lens.

39. A wavelength-converted optical source, comprising:
a source of optical radiation;

an optical wavelength converter optically coupled to the source of optical radiation, wherein the optical wavelength converter is configured to generate a wavelength converted output beam of radiation from an input beam of radiation; and

an optical output coupler configured to receive the wavelength converted output beam of radiation, wherein the optical output coupler includes a plano-concave lens having a planar side and a concave side, wherein an optical axis of the plano-concave lens is tilted about an axis of curvature of the plano-concave lens or an axis parallel to the axis of curvature at or near a Brewster angle relative to a beam axis such that a beam of radiation is incident on a concave side of the plano-concave lens;

a first optical element configured to focus a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a first axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis; and a second optical element, wherein the first optical element is disposed between the planar side of the plano-concave lens and the second optical element, wherein the second optical element is configured to focus a beam of radiation emerging from the planar side of the plano-concave lens along a second axis that is perpendicular to the beam axis, wherein the second axis is different from the first axis.

40. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the source of optical radiation and optical wavelength converter are configured such that the wavelength converted output beam of radiation includes ultraviolet radiation.

41. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the source of optical radiation and optical wavelength converter are configured such that the wavelength converted output beam of radiation has a substantially elliptical cross-section having a major diameter between

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about 0.2 mm and about 0.6 mm and a minor diameter between about 0.15 mm and about 0.5 mm.

42. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 41, wherein the plano-concave lens is configured to diverge an approximately parallel beam of radiation incident on the concave side such that a diameter of the approximately parallel beam of radiation increases to between about 1 mm and about 5 mm.

43. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the wavelength converter is a nonlinear optical crystal having Brewster angle or near Brewster angle output face that is concave curved and acts as the plano-concave lens.

44. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 43, wherein a confocal parameter of the output coupler is less than a length of a nonlinear optical crystal, whereby functions of the wavelength converter and plano-concave lens are combined into a single element.

45. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the plano-concave lens is made from a non-linear optical material having a higher threshold for damage from light than fused silica or calcium difluoride.

46. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the first optical element includes a cylindrical lens.

47. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the second optical element includes a cylindrical lens.

48. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the first optical element includes a first cylindrical lens and the second optical element is a second cylindrical lens.

49. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the first optical element includes a prism.

50. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the second optical element includes a prism.

51. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the first optical element includes a first prism and the second optical element includes a second prism.

52. The wavelength-converted optical source of claim 39, wherein the first optical element or the second optical element includes a prism and a spherical lens.

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